DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 426 600 FL 025 644

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TITLE The Resolution of Identity in a Cross-Cultural Crisis.
PUB DATE 1998-03-00
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Association for Asian Studies (New Orleans, LA, April 11-14, 1991) and the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (32nd, Seattle, WA, March 17-21, 1998). This paper is revised version of a paper entitled, "December 7, 1985: Korean Student Occupation of the American Cultural Center in Kwangju, Korea--Autobiography as History."
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Change; Case Studies; *English (Second Language); *Identification (Psychology); *International Relations; Language Patterns; *Language Role; Language Teachers; Language Usage; Personal Narratives

ABSTRACT

This paper describes an educator's decision to change careers from that of foreign service officer to teacher of English as a Second Language is traced to a December 1985 event in Korea in which the American Cultural Center in Kwangju was occupied by protesting Korean students. Analysis of this event and its effect on the educator focuses on the interaction of culture, language, and personal identity within an individual in such a cross-cultural crisis. The event is described, and the ways in which public institutions and figures (American and Korean), the Korean press, participating students, and the Korean public responded are examined. The sit-in is then analyzed in terms of the language used by the protesting students, and the educator examines his own behavior during the event. It is concluded that the educator resolved his own personal crisis within the context of this international/intercultural crisis. Appended materials include reflections on the event written immediately after its occurrence and a list of questions for discussion of the paper. (Contains 22 references.) (MSE)

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The Resolution of Identity in a Cross-Cultural Crisis
by Lou Spaventa

(This paper is a version of one originally presented at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting in New Orleans, April 11-14, 1991 That paper was entitled: "December 2, 1985: Korean Student Occupation of the American Cultural Center in Kwangju, Korea - Autobiography as History)

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Preface

This paper is about the way culture, language and identity interact within an individual and in a cross-cultural crisis. Though the paper is not directly about teaching, in a more profound way than anything else in my inner life and in my public life, the crisis described in this paper pushed me to a resolution of my identity. The resolution for me was a return to teaching ESL with the full realization that the life that I had led as a foreign service officer was over. I cannot say that I did not regret the change in my life's path. Perhaps I still do. I can say that attempting to understand what happened to me and because of my actions in the particular instance described has made me a better teacher to my students. Why is this so? It is so because I have a deeper understanding of the tensions in personal identity one naturally encounters when learning a new language and the culture that it is wrapped in. At some level of learning and at some time, all of us encounter such tensions as learning transforms us from what we are to what we will become. This paper then may stand as an allegory for the pain of transformation.

Introduction: History and Inquiry Research

The assumption I make in this study is that history is constructed through the interaction of text and interpretation and then judged by the standards of professional practice. What is considered valid or even *true* represents a judgement based upon understanding of professional practice, not on notions of absoluteness and objectivity. Validation of research is then the social construction of knowledge (Mishler, 1990:416). "It is not the regularity of the world that imposes itself on our senses but the regularity of our institutionalized beliefs that imposes itself on the world" (Collins quoted in Mishler, 1990:416). This theoretical view is central to inquiry research: "a family of approaches that explicitly acknowledge and rely on the dialectic interplay of theory, methods, and findings over the course of a study...that share an emphasis on the continuous process through which observations and interpretations shape and

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reshape each other" (Mishler, 1990:416). In this study, I follow an inquiry approach to analysis of behaviors during a one day long sit in at the American Cultural Center in Kwangju, Korea on December 2, 1985. I was a principal participant in the events of that day and recorded my understanding of what had happened after the student sit in ended.

I will use linguistics and social psychology as my main theoretical guides with which to understand the behavior of others and my own behavior.The data for analysis will come from public and private texts, illustrative of differing interpretations of the same physical event. I will be occupied with understanding of the voices present during the event, a primary concern being to understand the nature of the event as a social encounter (See Goffman, 1959).

In accordance with this line of reasoning, I will briefly describe the December 2nd sit in in a standard reportorial narrative, then consider the background understanding of the voices that spoke to interpretation of the event, and finally attempt to create an analysis of the event.

December 2, 1985

On December 2, 1985, nine students from the Honam Branch of the Sam Min Tu, a national political student movement in the Republic of Korea (ROK), occupied the American Cultural Center in Kwangju, Korea. The students made a series of demands directed towards the U.S. Ambassador in the ROK, Richard Walker, the then ruling Min Jung Dang (Democratic Justice Party), the then President Chun Doo Hwan, and the Kwangju American Cultural Center Director, who is the present writer. These demands related to ROK-US relations and to domestic politics in the ROK (Kwangju Police Summary, 1985). The December 2nd occupation was one event in a series of several attempts at penetration of American facilities in the ROK, of particular significance was the May 23 to 26, 1985 occupation of the United States Information Service (USIS) library in Seoul, the capital city of the ROK.

The nine students, representing various elements of the Honam Sam Min Tu, forcibly entered the Kwangu American Cultural Center (Kwangju ACC) on December 2nd between 10:50 and 11:50 in the morning. The nine barricaded themselves in the Director's Office. Local Kwangju ACC employees, all Korean nationals, talked with the students and then called the Kwangju ACC Director in Seoul, where he was attending a regional directors' conference. An Embassy team, consisting of the Embassy Security Director, the Embassy Political Officer

in charge of student affairs, and the Kwangju American Cultural Center Director, was flown down to Kwangju by U.S. military jet, arriving at approximately 5PM that afternoon. After a brief discussion with local police, the team proceeded to the ACC, where it began discussions with the students for one hour, starting around 6:30PM. Further discussion was scheduled for 8:30PM. Between the end of the first discussion and the time scheduled for the second one to begin, the students decided that they could not talk to the Embassy team, but could only continue discussion through written communication. 8:30PM passed without discussion resuming. At that point, the local police were given permission to apprehend the students. When police attempted to break down the barricade in the Director's Office, the students shouted slogans and threw molotov cocktails into the ACC courtyard. These were immediately extinguished by city firemen. By shortly after 9PM, the students had been apprehended by police and boarded on police buses. That was the end of the occupation. It had lasted about nine hours.

A personal narrative written by me shortly after these events transpired is contained in Appendix A at the end of this paper. It is especially revealing of my feelings and my perception of how the Korean community would understand my role in the resolution of the sit in.

Differing Voices

The next section of this paper deals with the way public instititutions and public figures regarded the sit in and the students who had created it. In each case, there was a particular interpretation of the event conditioned by a particular set of interests.

The U..S. Government View

The Embassy view of events in Korea during 1985 represents a combination of U.S. foreign policy goals in East Asia, bilateral relations with the Republic of Korea, and the experience of the May 23-26 student sit in at the American Cultural Center Library in Seoul.

U.S. foreign policy goals in East Asia, according to the Seoul Embassy, were to encourage regional stability while also encouraging free trade and open political systems. In terms of specific countries, these policies were more or less salient: in China, the latter two points were promoted, in Japan the first and second. In regard to North-South Korean dialogue, the U.S. was

particularly sensitive to its first concern of regional stability, and publicly supported the principal of peaceful unification.

In terms of bilateral relations with Korea, the U.S. was interested in opening Korean markets to U.S. products, for example, beef and tobacco; in reinforcing South Korean efforts to open up the domestic political process; in reassuring South Korea of its security commitment (This became more urgent after the fall of Vietnam in 1975: Koreans saw a parallel between U.S. support of South Vietnam and its support of the ROK); in seeing a free press; in securing South Korean compliance with the protection of intellectual property rights; and in promoting U.S. culture and institutions. However, this agenda was compromised by events in South Korea, starting with Park Chung Hee's assassination in 1979, Chun Doo Hwan's rise to power in 1980, and most importantly, the Kwangju Incident of May 1980. From the time of the Incident to the time of this study, the U.S. Embassy continually was placed in the position of explaining its role in the Kwangju Incident. The official U.S. position was that the Incident was a Korean domestic problem and thus the U.S. did not intervene (Shin Dong-A interview with former U.S. Ambassador to the ROK, Richard Gleystein, July 1986). The Embassy further stated that the Special Forces unit which Chun Doo Hwan sent to Kwangju to quell the armed confrontation beween citizens and police and army had at no time been under U.S. operational control, and that the regular ROK Army 20th Division, which had been under U.S. command and which President Chun sent to Kwangju subsequently, had not done the real violence.

On May 23, 1985, 73 students managed to rush into the main reading room of the USIS Library in Seoul. Immediately, a large group of international press formed on the street in front of the building and across the street at the Lotte Hotel as students posted signs with slogans calling for the U.S. to make a public apology to ROK citizens for its role in the Kwangju Incident and called for President Chun Doo Hwan's removal. The students voluntarily left the building at noon on May 26th, stating that further talk with U.S. authorities would have been fruitless, and charging the U.S. with *insincerity* in refusing to acknowledge its responsibility in the 1980 Kwangju Incident. This notion of *sincerity* and its opposite, *insincerity*, play out again in the December 2nd occupation of the Kwangju ACC.

During the four days of turmoil in the USIS building, Embassy authorities were being pressured to let South Korean police storm the building and remove

the students. The Embassy resisted this pressure, which upset ROK officials. (Here I rely on personal knowledge of events for my assertions.) When another sit in occurred in Kwangju on December 2nd, the U.S. Embassy made its decisions in the light of the May sit in in Seoul. This time it decided not to let students draw out their occupation of the building because: the Seoul sit in had taught the Embassy that there was little to be gained from allowing the students to stay, dissidents would still be critical and the ROK authorities would still be frustrated by U.S. "leniency," 2. that the more time students remained in occupation, the more publicity was focused on events that the Embassy wished not to have to explain continually, e.g. the Kwangju Incident, and 3. that this second incident, if not quickly dealt with, would send a signal to other like-minded groups that the U.S. would not take a hard line against those who occupied its buildings in the ROK. Publicly, the Embassy explained its decision to move quickly in Kwangju because the students who entered the ACC were armed with molotov cocktails and had refused to continue face to face discussion with the Embassy team. However, the final decision of whether and how long to entertain student demands came not from the Embassy itself, but from Washington.

The ROK Government's View

The Korean government's position on the December 2nd occupation was clear. They wanted the students out immediately. I was met on arrival in Kwangju by local security authorities who asked for permission to go in and remove students before I got to the Cultural Center. The students were characterized as nothing but criminals by the local security authorities. Because the May Seoul sit in had lasted four days, the authorities were also concerned with the amount of international publicity a similar period of time would afford student and opposition causes, should the Embassy enter into protracted dialogue with the students who were sitting in. The position that student activists were radical and dangerous to the health of society (See Spaventa, 1991) was consistently maintained by ROK authorities, but was not representative of public opinion. Many Koreans, and particularly opposition supporters, considered the students to be doing the work of democratic conscience, albeit with youthful excess (personal communication). Kim Tae Jung represents an opposition figure who held such a view.

An Opposition Politician's View

Kim Tae Jung's voice has always commanded great attention and respect in Cholla Province. Kim is from Mokp'o, a city in South Cholla Province. His several battles with the Park and Chun governments since the 1970's included kidnapping, imprisonment, exile, and house arrest. In his speeches and writings, Kim often quotes Thomas Jefferson. He thinks of himself as a democrat. (See Prison Writings, 1987 for example.) In a speech entitled, "The Korean Peninsula - Peace and Reunification" given by Kim at Riverside Church in New York City on February 22, 1984, Kim claimed that the greatest danger to peace on the Korean peninsula came from within South Korea. He claimed that South Korea was under dictatorial rule, did not guarantee basic freedoms, did hnot hold "elections of true value" (p.2), and did not follow democratic practice. Kim felt that the North was not a threat to the South because "democratic government can guarantee the freedom, justice, and human dignity to which Korean people have so long aspired" (ibid). In the conclusion to his speech, Kim noted "There is...a growing anti-American feeling among our people because of United States failure to support the cause of democracy in the South" (p.4). Kim's role vis a vis students was that of a conciliator and a voice of moderation. While unable to fully participate in politics upon his return to Korea in 1985 (It was not until July 1986 that Kim was even able to mix publicly at Seoul U.S. Embassy functions with ruling part members (Hankuk Ilbo, July 7, 1986)), Kim had wide influence on opposition politics in the southwest of the Korean Peninsula. In a way, his situation regarding the U.S. Government was like that of student activists: Kim was given some protection because of the U.S. influence on Chun's government, but was still vulnerable to domestic political machinations.

The most direct connection between an opposition leader like Kim Tae Jung and the students who occupied the Kwangju ACC on December 2nd, was the campaign to reform the ROK Constitution. This was something that was a major political issue for the opposition and something that was taken up by student activists in the Cholla Provinces and nationally. The students asked for a meeting with opposition leaders as part of their demands, yet opposition leaders with connections to Kim in Kwangju lobbied hard for Embassy intervention on behalf of the nine students who occupied the Kwangju ACC only after their arrest. The opposition position was that the students were not enemies of the U.S., nor did they intend harm to the Kwangju ACC. The U.S.

Government, as protector of democratic elements in the ROK, had a responsibility to see that these students were not unreasonably punished for what they did. Their actions represented the zeal and commitment of idealistic, democratic youth, not the scheming of hardened revolutionary cadres.

Reporting on the Sit In in the Korean Press

The Korean press treated the December 2nd Kwangju American Cultural Center occupation as another instance of radical students seizing control of a building. The press generally reported student political activism of this sort in negative tones, even in so-called straight reporting pieces (Spaventa, 1991). The press also reported that the Center Director was the one who asked police to intervene and remove the demonstrators (Korea Times, December 3, 1985; Hankuk Ilbo, December 4, 1985). This led to local concern with what was perceived to be differential treatment of political activity: people on the streets claimed that the U.S. acted quickly and did not allow dialogue with the students as it had in Seoul because the sit in happened in Kwangju, and as they felt, the U.S. was complicitous in the killing of scores of citizens in the 1980 Kwangju Incident. Thus, the U.S. maintained one set of policies for dealing with events outside of Kwangju and another for events in Kwangju, just as the Seoul government had always done. From the point of view of the students who sat in on December 2nd, the U.S. needed to apologize for its role in the Kwangju Incident and the Chun Gvoernment had to recognize its illegitimacy and step down. In particular, the U.S. needed to stop pressuring the ROK to open its markets to U.S. goods and to remove all its capital from the ROK; and the ROK Government needed to replace the "fascist" constitution with a "people's" constitution. The students demanded a meeting with U.S. Ambassador Richard Walker, a meeting with a representative from the incumbent Min Jung Dang to arrange a grand meeting of workers, farmers, and opposition leaders to be held at the Kwangju Provincial Headquarters building, and a press conference which included domestic and international media reporters (Honam Region Sam Min Tu broadside, 1985).

The Sit In Students' View

The nine students who took part in the sit in at the Kwangju American Cultural Center were members of the Honam *Sam Min Tu* (삼민투),

a national student movement, which organized political action in opposition to the Chun Government and to U.S. policy in the ROK. The students were armed with molotov cocktails and threatened to act if police tried to arrest them. They barricaded themselves in the Center Director's office, ripped down outside window netting and displayed signs that read, to give one example, "Our Demands: 1. A meeting with the U.S. Ambassador, 2. A press confernce with foreign reporters, and 3. An opposition forces - workers, farmers, etc. citizens' meeting" (우리의 요구 1. 미대사와 회견 담요구
2. 내외기자회견 3. 재야 세력 노동자 농민등 시민 대회)
All written placards and broadsides were done in *Hangul*, the native Korean alphabet, without use of Chinese characters, which would otherwise have been commonly used in such language. This in itself was a political act and will be discussed below.

Phone lines to the building had been ordered cut off by the Embassy, but students had been led to believe that it was the Kwangju police who had given the order. The students created paper megaphones in order to communicate their demands to reporters who stood outside of the building gates, which were closed. When the Embassy team - the Security Officer, the Political Officer in Charge of Student Affairs, and the Center Director - arrived to talk with the students, they were told, through a foreign service national employee of the Center who acted as a go-between, that the students wanted a reporter to be present at a meeting with the Embassy team to monitor the meeting and that they wanted to be given a copy of that day's evening paper. Negotiations began with students giving their demands after asking for identification of the Embassy team. The first meeting ended with a decision to meet again at 8:30PM; the first meeting had begun at 6:30 and ended at 7:30. After 8:30, students told the team through the go-between that they had decided not to meet face to face because their views and those of the U.S. Embassy team were too far apart. They commented on the *insincerity* of the Embassy team. They said they would only communicate then by writing. The students would not reconsider. Shortly thereafter, police were given the word to intervene and arrest the students. As the police tried to break into the Director's Office, the students shouted and threw molotov cocktails out into the building courtyard. Firemen, who had been at the ready, doused the flames and sprayed water into the Office at the students. Police, meanwhile, broke in the door and apprehended the nine

students who resisted arrest by blocking the barricaded door with their bodies as they tried to lob the rest of their molotovs into the ACC courtyard.
The students who occupied the ACC on December 2nd used a similar rhetoric to that of the students who occupied the Seoul USIS Library on May 23-26. 1985. Their broadside to the people is titled, "Why Did We Have to Go Into the American Cultural Center?" It begins:

> *Under the yoke of a forty year tragic history of liberation and division,the great mass of the Korean people have undergone the violent pressures of dictatorial regimes, and, in spite of the history of blood ties, have, countless times, experienced the loathsome figure of an antinomical America. The long term continuous support on behalf of military dictatorship, and American backing for the May 1980 Kwangju Massacre are among the representative examples.*
> The Honam Region Sam Min Struggle Committee, 12/5/85

The students represented themselves as fighting for the establishment of honest bilateral relations between the U.S. and the ROK, the safeguard of the Korean people's autonomy, the securing of the masses' right to live, the people's unification, and the liberation of the masses. The language of their broadsheet described U.S. economic pressure on the ROK as "murderous" and the U.S. position in the May Seoul sit in as "insincere" (Honam Sam Min Tu broadsheet, December 2, 1985). They claimed to represent their fellow students and the 40,000,000 (Koreans living in the South) who wanted to democratize, as had their Seoul comrades in May. On behalf of their Sam Min Tu comrades, they demanded to know for the second time "the fundamental historical reason behind the consistently silent and insincere posture of the U.S. - Why had it not apologized for the Kwangju Massacre and why did it not stop its support of the military dictatorship?" (ibid)

The Korean Public's Views

Other voices from the Kwangju community supported the Honam Sam Min Tu students' analysis of domestic and bilateral issues. One letter addressed to the "Director of the American Cultural Center" said,

> *It is the U.S. Government that gives the worst impression to us. It is your government that harasses us. I wonder what interest*

you bring to your own country by enabling dictatorship through your internal interference. You are making money by selling your weapons to those dictatorial governments. And you sell your products at high prices.

I advise you to take some measures before the people retaliate.

Letter from Kim So-San of Kwangju City, 12/11/85

In a petition entitled "We Believe the U.S. Is a True Friend of Korea" (미국은 한국의 진정한 우방 인줄 믿습니다), the parents of the nine students arrested and later brought to trial for the December 2nd sit in asked me, as Center Director, to testify on behalf of their sons and daughters, stating that the students were "certain that they will not receive sentences and can be released from jail if you, the Director, appear in person and make clear the U.S. position on the facts surrounding the incident and the demands raised by the students" (excerpt from letter petition, 5/12/86). The petition ended with a statement which included this sentiment "...show that America is a true ally of Korea and not an immoral country which makes use of Korea for the sake of its own national interest" (ibid).

On the street, Kwangju American Cultural Center Korean employees were being told by their contacts that the Center had received its "innoculation" and henceforth would not be bothered; in other words, students would not attempt further occupations of the building. Immediately after the December 2nd occupation, attendance at the Center diminished considerably as those who frequented the Center stayed away out of one or more reasons: to protest the handling of the students, to avoid social embarrassment by being associated with what happened simply because they used the Center, or to avoid harassment by the Korean uniformed and plain clothes security agents who formed human obstacles for those still wishing to enter the Center. The Center Director was regarded as having given the word for the police to apprehend the students, and the U.S. Government was seen to have demonstrated its close link to and support of the disliked Chun Government.

Analyzing the Sit In: Language as a Framing Tool

Several aspects of the language used by the students who occupied the Kwangju ACC on December 2, 1985 were distinctive. Their language framed their narrative perspective on Korea's history and contemporary politics. The

students chose to use only the Korean alphabet , *Hangul*, ( ) in written communication and in banners and broadsides, even though many of the terms employed were Sino-Korean in origin. References to verbal interaction between themselves and U.S. representatives were couched in understandings of terminology which must be categorized at some level as neo-Confucian. In face to face encounters, students chose to speak only in Korean, even though they had knowledge of English. I will discuss these phenomena below, but I wish to raise first the question of the interrelationship between language and thought, what has often been referred to as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

In his book, The Linguistic Shaping of Thought, Alfred Bloom states that fourteen years of interacting with the Chinese language and its speakers alerted him to certain important differences between the Chinese mode of speaking and thinking and that of speakers of English. He addresses the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis which concerns the question of whether the language we speak may shape the way we think. Bloom carried out linguistic investigation among Chinese and English-speaking populations, principally in the area of syntax and discourse analysis. His focus was on implicational and counterfactual constructions of the type *"If X had been_____, then X would have _____."* He found that Chinese speakers, while quite able to deal with the concepts of such constructions, did not find them natural to every day discourse because they "...do not have at their disposal already prepared cognitive schemas specifically designed for interpreting information in a counterfactual way" (1981:21). He also supported the notion that as such constructions become common, they become more manageable as speech strategies (1981:59).

> *Historically speaking, it is certainly not the case that structural differences between Chinese and English bear primary responsibility for creating the culturally-specific modes of thinking (that he is discussing). From a historical point of view, languages are much more the products of their cultures than determiners of them. What one can and cannot express distinctly in any particular language at any particular point in its development is the aggregate result of the totality of social, political, environmental, and intellectual influences that have, from generation to generation, affected its speakers' lives. A new insight, a new experience, a new discovery, a new invention, a new institution, or new contacts*

with another language-world lead to the development of new linguistic forms (1981: 59).

Bloom addressed himself to questions such as "When and in what ways do linguistic categories shape thought?" and "Which linguistic differences entail corresponding cognitive differences?" (1981:1). In discussing one of the refutations of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, the fact that we can make adequate translations from one language to another, Bloom points out that "...when a speaker of language A labels a specific perspective on the world which the speaker of language B not only does not label, but also does not share, then translation cannot proceed by simply supplying a suggestive circumlocution" (1981:85). He insists that there are cognitive barriers to cross cultural communication.

> *...an English speaker cannot rely on a taste of experience, or a brief verbal description, or a simple combination of labeled schemas from his repertory, to understand what a French speaker means by* apprecier*; to understand what he himself means by the verb* to ppreciate*; to understand what the Chinese speaker means by* li mao *- with its moral and natural law implications - or to understand the highly subtle distinctions carried by the more than ten Chinese terms which divide up the semantic range of the English noun* reason *or the highly subtle distinctions in level of formality signalled by the various Japanese terms that serve in place of the English* you. (1981:86)

Bloom's findings on Chinese-English conceptual barriers have relevance to the present analysis because it points to the difficulties of achieving understanding in the crisis situation that occurred at the Kwangju ACC. Korean-English communication is fraught with similar cross linguistic difficulties - a case in point being the concept of sincerity. Bloom asks

> *Does the fact that theEnglish language, unlike Chinese, provides a distinct means for shifting from talk of people or acts as being* sincere, *to talk of* sincerity *as an abstracted property imply that English speakers are inclined to think about being sincere in a more detached way?* (1981:1)

If one changes Korean for Chinese, a similar question could be asked and the answer seems to be yes. The students who sat in at the Kwangju ACC and those who had occupied the Seoul USIS Library both felt that their U.S. interlocutors had a curious detachment of practice from philosophy, which translated into *insincerity* (Statement of May 26, 1985 by students who occupied the Seoul USIS Library and Statement of December 2, 1985 by students who occupied the Kwangju ACC). I believe that such cross linguistic differences between Korean and English derive from the particular notions of moral behavior embedded in the Korean neo-Confucian heritage and learned through socialization at home and school. This does not mean Koreans are overtly Confucian and knowledgeable about how they make their deepest and most intuitive judgements. It may well be that the most fundamental understanding of human nature that Koreans possess, is, as it is for most peoples, part of the cultural given of Korean society.

Tony Mitchell (1986) has posited various types of neo-Confucianism in Korean thought. These types are dependent upon which generation the individual is part. Because it is not explicit for the most part, neo-Confucianism occupies a place in Korean socialization "...buried deep in Korean thinking" (1986:20), and thus is referred to by Mitchell as sub-Confucianism. I suggest that this thinking is operational at the level of morality and values. The concept of *sincerity* employed by the students who occupied the Kwangju ACC, and those who occupied the Seoul USIS Library in May 1985, too, is redolent with the richness of neo-Confucian meaning. Tu Wei Ming, the eminent neo-Confucian scholar, tells us that for man to be sincere is for him to realize his humanity, to cultivate *The Way*, to find the truth of his human nature (1979). When one in sincere, one actualizes, completes and perfects one's true nature "...which ontologically means the nature of other men, of things, of the universe" (1979:76).

Thus, in neo-Confucian thought, the sincere individual realizes the self through self-transformation and assists Heaven and Earth in their transforming and nurturing functions.

In my view, the connection between criticism of the U.S. Government as *insincere* and Korean neo-Confucian thinking is the neo-Confucian concept of right leadership derived from the notion of fulfilling one's ontological destiny as a human being. Koreans have expected the U.S. to exercise right leadership in

influencing Korean domestic affairs. Activist students trace the division of the Koeran Peninsula to improper and self-serving influence on the part of the U.S. Government at the time of the country's division after World War II. Therefore, historically the U.S. Government has been *insincere*, and at the time of the occupation of the Kwangju ACC, it continued its insincere behavior by failing to recognize and support domestic forces such as the student activists, and by failing to acknowledge its perceived culpability for the events of May 1980 in Kwangju. In their broadside of December 2nd, the occupying students wrote of the U.S. *silent contempt (* 묵살 *)*when asked to explain its role in Korean history.

The relevance of language to the interpretation of social acts and point of view receives further corroboration from a study of educational attitudinal differences between Korean-Americans and Korean exchange students that I did in 1987. I found that the single most important determiner of response was the language employed in the survey instrument. Those respondents choosing to answer in Korean exhibited a consistency and intensity of response that was much more homogenous than those who chose to answer in English (Spaventa, 1987). Furthermore, certain response patterns marked off Korean exchange students from their Korean-American counterparts. These pertained to teaching morality and ethics in the education system, the moral leadership role of teachers, the cultivation of the individual who follows the proper path an the search for truth (1987:104).

The conclusion that I draw from my previous work and that of Bloom is that language is a tool for framing experience, both consciously and automatically. The students who occupied the Kwangju ACC prepared their written texts consciously and carefully. However, in face to face encounters, language use may be rehearsed but tends to be automatic in so far as the ritual quality of the encounter is shared. In a cross cultural context, everything is problematic: the nature of the ritual, the semantic domain of the indexical and meta-indexical (or referential) language, and the nature of the moral lessons drawn. I will examine both written and face to face language, the former in student documents and Embassy documents, and the latter in my account of the face to face encounter with the students.

In the Republic of Korea, educated people such as the student activists who occupied the Kwangju ACC are expected to have a certain mastery of *Hanja*, Sino-Korean characters. Indeed, one cannot read most newspapers

without a passive knowledge of a few thousand characters. In fact, the more education one has, the more *Hanja* one is likely to know. The nine students who occupied the ACC deliberately chose not to use *Hanja* in their broadsides and their placards. This choice of Korean characters resonates with activities in Korean history such as the establishment of the Tongrip Shinmun by Suh Jae Pihl during the Korean Enlightenment and the attempt at compiling a dictionary of the Korean language during Japanese occupation (Spaventa 1988, 1990). It signals Korean nationalism and autonomy. Indeed, the contents of the broadside that the students had prepared beforehand speaks of the Korean people and their autonomy.

In describing recent Korean politics, the students chose terms such as *dictatorial regime (독재정권)*, and *current military dictatorship (현군부독재정권)* to refer to the Chun Government. They characterized events in Kwangju in 1980 as a *massacre (학살)*, not an *incident (사태)* as it was commonly described in the Korean media. The U.S. was said to be *insincere (불성실)*, a term which in its neo-Confucian sense implies a breach of responsibility for right action, especially in relation to statesmanship: for the students who sat in at the ACC, the U.S. had not revealed its true reasons for its historical actions in Korea. In fact, the U.S. had *discredited* itself *(불신)*, having dismissed the demand for an explanation of its role in the Kwangju Incident made by the May Seoul sit in students with *silent contempt (묵살)*. U.S. characterization of the *blood ties (혈맹)*between it and the ROK (for example in the speeches of then Ambassador Richard A. Walker) were dismissed as *self-flattery (자처)*. The U.S. was accused of committing *economic imperialism (경제적 제국주의( )* in Korea. Finally, student demands were mostly cast in direct imperative form, rather than in a polite form befitting the social distance implied by domestic student to foreign diplomatic relations.

In terms of the face to face encounters between the students and the Embassy team, the most salient fact is that each side chose to use its own language, relying upon a foreign service national employee of the Kwangju ACC to do simultaneous translation. The U.S. officer in charge was the security officer, who did not speak Korean. Moreover, the political officer and the center director, who did speak Korean, were subordinate to the security officer in the face to face encounter. The U.S. side chose frankness as its theme in dealing with the students. This idea that a frank discussion or a candid relation of one's

position is the key to honest dialogue is one that the Embassy had previously adhered to in its meetings with groups of student activists around the country. The result tended to be further distancing of student activists from the U.S. because they came to see the U.S. as self-serving and insincere in its treatment of the Korean people. What to U.S. Embassy officials was a gift of great importance given to student activists - frank dialogue - was admission of self-serving behavior to the activists. In the case of the Kwangju sit in, frankness again backfired. When students found out from the Embassy team that the U.S. Embassy had ordered the phone lines cut off and not the local police as they had been told by ACC employees, they were surprised. Afterward, surprise became anger and led to a decision that they would no longer talk with the U.S. team, but only communicate in writing.

The two students who represented the other seven barricaded in the Director's Office took the position that the first encounter would have the quality of a negotiation, with both sides trying to manage their demands. The Embassy team took the position that the first encounter was a good faith effort to listen and convince the students to leave. Understanding of what the face to face event itself was was quite different. Students were occupied with clearly relaying and recording positions on issues relative to their demands. The Embassy team was occupied with impressing upon the students that they were not there to negotiate. Language on both sides reflected these positions. The effect of face to face encounter between speakers of different languages with differing perspectives and differing references was to make impossible a mutually satisfactory resolution of a situation, which at best, would have been difficult to resolve had the speakers the same language and references with only differing perspectives. (An example of this latter would be a management versus labor dispute in a Detroit auto plant.)

Everyday Life: The Nature of Face to Face Encounters

In this part of my discussion, I would like to focus on my own behavior during the sit in. This focus reveals a fundamental contradiction in my presentation of self, which ultimately had a great deal to do with my resignation from the U.S. Foreign Service.

In The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959), by way of axiom, Erving Goffman quotes E.H. Volkert as follows: "It is highly important for us to realize that we do not as a matter of fact lead our lives, make our decisions, and

reach our goals in everyday life either statistically or scientifically. *We live by inference*" (1959:3). Goffman talks of face to face behavior as having a promisory character, whose true value will not be established until after that individual has left the presence of his interlocutors. He "...will convey an impression to others which it is in his interests to convey" (ibid). Lest we believe that such analysis means we are merely actors on the Shakespearean stage of the world, Randall Collins points out that Goffman's point of view, like Durkheim's, is essentially a moral one because it is in face to face daily rituals that men and women create the moral universe which they inhabit (Collins:1988). Goffman makes his position clear thus

> *Society is organized on the principal that any individual who possesses certain social characteristics has a moral right to expect that others will value and treat him in an appropriate way. Connected with this principle is a second, namely that an individual who implicitly or explicitly signifies that he has certain social characteristics ought in fact to be what he claims he is. In consequence, when an individual projects a definition of a situation and thereby makes an implicit or explicit claim to be a person of a particular kind, he automatically exerts a moral demand upon the others, obliging them to value and treat him in the manner that persons of his kind have a right to expect. He also implicitly forgoes all claims to be things he does not appear to be and hence foregoes the treatment that would be appropriate for such individuals. The others find, then, that the individual has informed them as to what is and as to what they ought to see as the "is"* (1959:13).

My own behavior in face to face interaction with the students during the sit in was consistent with my role as an Embassy officer, even though I spoke to the students in Korean and I gave them my own personal history as a Peace Corps Volunteer in order to demonstrate my feelings for the Korean people and my dedication to the good of their country. This was the first time when a public occasion forced me into a position in which I stood in opposition to the politics of change. Working alone in Kwangju as the Director of the American Cultural Center and with a background of being an "old Korea hand" for my two tours in Peace Corps (1969-70 and 1973-75), I had seen myself as something of an exile and political oddball just as Chollado people saw themselves in relation to

the axis of power which stretched from Seoul to Kyungsangnamdo. In private conversation when asked for my own views, I was comfortable criticizing the Chun Government and my own government. I tried to negotiate an inner detente between my personal feelings of dissent and my public advocacy role as a U.S. Government representative in Kwangju by being receptive to opposition leaders, dissidents, and students. In face to face encounters I moved quickly to lead Korean contacts to the position that I was different because I knew the Korean people from having lived among them, and because I was able to put events in Korea into a Korean historical perspective. Yet I never had to put the promisory character of my self-presentation to a test. Among hardline U.S. and Korean bureaucrats, I maintained silence or marked myself off as having the liberal, if not sometimes radical point of view (For example, I was for complete ' removal of U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula). With students, dissidents, and others, I trusted that my dealings with them would convey a message of understanding. All this changed with the December 2nd occupation of the Kwangju ACC.

Before I flew to Kwangju to meet with the students, when I was being readied by the Ambassador and the Public Affairs Counselor of the Seoul U.S. Embassy, I was already feeling the contradiction between my public role and my private thoughts. I found out quickly that in this circumstance, the students were not to be given the luxury of time to work themselves out of their situation. The mandate ws to end the occupation after one honest attempt at persuading the students to voluntarily leave the building. We drove to a U.S. air base, K2, and flew down to Kwangju on a U.S. military jet. I had asked to drive my own car down, but I was refused in this. As it turned out, we arrived in Kwangju around 5PM. I certainly could have made the drive to Kwangju quicker. However, I now was a subordinate and somewhat marginal part of an Embassy team which consisted of a security officer and a political officer from the Seoul Embassy, and I was in the hands of the American military, something which I studiously avoided in my day to day life in Kwangju. These events foreshadowed the heightening of my contradiction in face to face meeting with the students at the Kwangju ACC.

At the Cultural Center in Kwangju, I was split between consultation with my staff who were all Korean, and consultation with the Embassy team, none of whom was Korean. I reacted to this dichotomy of attention by trying to focus on the sense of the situation that my Korean colleagues had. Yet the mandate that

the Embassy team had been given, which was periodically reinforced by phone contact with Embassy officers in Seoul, pushed the momentum of events forward so that I was forced to focus on preventing a quick arrest. I also could see that my Korean colleagues were deeply upset by the situation because of their reactions to events during the nine hour occupation.
In talking with the two student representatives in the AV technician's office, and later with all the students at the window of my own occupied office, I presented myself as unjustly wronged. I asked the students by what political authority they had come into the Center. I told them of the service I presumed I had done for their country. The students saw me as what I was, which was a U.S. Government official who was associated with the events of that day and with the events of recent Korean history that, in their thinking, compelled them to break into the Cultural Center. In fact, I was merely one of the Embassy team who had exhibited insincerity in dealing with them face to face such that they felt they could not talk and had to resort to written communication.

After the event I felt that the streets of Hwang Kum Dong, where the Center was located, were full of accusatory glances when I headed for home on foot around 10PM on the night of December 2nd. I was walking with the two other Americans from the Embassy team and I knew that they were going to have dinner with the Kwangju Chief of Police at Soo Kung Kalbi Restaurant. Moreover, the restaurant was being reopened to accomodate the Chief and the Embassy team. For me, this was the last act of clarification of who I was in this situation. Going to the restaurant would have been going to a sort of victory party over the students, and of this I wanted no part. I refused to go with the team, and went home to release my feelings of betrayal and disappointment - in my government and in myself. The promissory and moral quality of the interaction had brought home to me the essential contradiction of my position. I left Kwangju for Christmas vacation. In July of 1986, I resigned from the U.S. Foreign Service. The immediate reason was the health of my oldest daughter. However, the seed of my leaving began with uncovering the contradiction of my role as a representative of the U.S. Government in the December 2nd Kwangju ACC occupation.

Concluding Thoughts: Resolving a Personal Crisis in the Middle of a Cross-Cultural Crisis

I have used inquiry research and the tools of linguistic and social-psychological analysis to try to understand this event. However, I also used the experential learning cycle that I learned at the School for International Training - from experience, to formulating ideas about that experience, to applying those ideas to additional experience, and coming to an understanding - in a very essential way for the direction of my life. I went into the sit in crisis with two conflicting sets of values and two differing identities. In the crisis, experience pushed me to question which set of values was central to my well being. I made a choice to identify a certain way and then acted upon that choice. This, along with other factors, led to my eventual resignation from the foreign service.

This account of the December 2, 1985 student occupation of the Kwangju American Cultural Center grows out of a need for personal understanding of my behavior in a small historical moment. The question might be raised as to how valid the account has been. What sorts of corroboration of my interpretation have I offered? Certainly, there is the quality of a memoir about some of the interpretation of events because I was privileged to information in the normal course of my work as a foreign service officer (*It should be stated here that none of the documents that I have used were classified or closed to public inspection.).* Yet there is a contract of validity that I have made with the reader: that is by introducing private thoughts into public space I offer the means to move forward on the basis of whatever understanding of the event I have mustered. This is interpretation which acknowledges explicitly the social construction of knowledge (Mishler: 1990). the question of how valid the study is moves toward what Lather calls "catalytic validity...the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it" (1986:272). More simply put, what can one do with this interpretation? I would like to address this question below.

The events of December 2nd are now open to reanalysis by other voices, such as those discussed above in the early part of this narrative. The interpretation offered here is one that focuses on the process of creating meaning from texts and face to face interactio in a cross-cultural environment in a state of crisis. It stresses the construction of understanding and the linguistic

and social nature of inquiry. It assumes the moral significance of human interaction.

I, one voice among many, have created an interpretation of what happened on December 2, 1985 to better understand my own role in events that day and their implcation for my own life. I believe that others, given the same set of texts, could construct differing interpretations, and that ultimately, meaning would be created through face to face discussion or through exchange of narratives. This implies that meaning is contingent and provisional, never fully defined for all time. It also implies that meaning is deepened by the inclusion of all voices acting as subjects of their own learning rather than as objects of the historian's learning. (*This parallels Freire's discussion of the teacher-student relationship in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1980*). Finally, the choice of interpretations is a question of choosing exemplary work; what constitutes good practice? That has been a prerogative of the scholarly community to whom the text is germane, but perhaps it is time to move the choice into the public sphere so that academic work becomes widely social and the proper concern of all rather than the limited domain of the few. I believe that what is needed is movement toward social praxis rather than social consumption. This study is dedicated toward that end.

Appendix A

A Personal Narrative

The following narrative represents my reflections on the student occupation of the ACC and its repercussions. It was written on the evening after the day of the occupation, around 8PM on December 3, 1985. The names of individuals have been changed except for my own and that of the U.S. Ambassador, Richard Walker.

This is an account of the events of December 2, 1985 as I remember them. I was inSeoul for the BPAO (Branch Public Affairs Officer) Conference. We had heard from the Ambassador, Pat Roy of the Pol/Mil, and Chuck Hall of Econ. Most of what they had to say about Korea was quite gloomy: Ambassador Walker felt that Chun Doo Hwan was becoming isolated and unapproachable, Roy was critical of the U.S. Military's lack of understanding of the feelings of their Korean counterparts, Hall saw problems for the Korean economy. Grant Goodman of the Commercial Section was the next briefer - he had ended his initial comments and was taking questions when we were interrupted by a phone calll for me. At the time , I was asking a question. I was stopped in mid-sentence. I went out to the hall to receive the call on the guard's phone. Choi Kyu-Shik, the deputy from the Kwangju Center, was on the line. He said that students had occupied my office. He thought there were six or seven students, but he was not sure. I called Bennie Loggins (Embassy Public Affairs Officer) out of the BPAO meeting and told him what had happened. He directed me to tell Mr. Choi to cut off the phone lines. Loggins called the Ambassador, who had since gone back to his office in the Embassy. Loggins said the Ambassador was not in a mood to go through a long bargaining sessiion. Loggins began contacting Washington, and called Doug Fitzsimmons to handle the press. Kang Soo-Il, the administrator at the Kwangju ACC called next to give more information. I took it over the phone in the Exectutive Secretary's office. Mr. Kang said that there were nine students claiming to be Sam Min Tu members from the Honam region. He said that four were from Chonnam Universtiy and five were from Chonpuk University. Their demands were to have a personal meeting with the Ambassador, to have a meeting with a representative from the Min Jung Dang at which students would demand a large meeting of workers, farmers, and opposition leaders to be held at the Kwangju Provincial Office Building downtown, and to have a press conference with foreign reporters. They also asked to see me. Their placards, which they placed in the windows of my office, were full of slogans condemning U.S. trade protectionism, the 'fascist' constitution (to be replaced by a 'people's' constitution), and the military dictatorship of Chun Doo Hwan. They also demanded the removal of U.S. capital from Korea.

Loggins directed me to go down right away to Kwangju. I went over to the Embassy to meet with Art Alexis of the Political Section, who was charged with student affairs, and Walt Rochak, head of the Security Office at the Embassy. I walked in on them in the Ambassador's office as he was telling them that he was not going to tolerate a long drawn-out seige, similar to the one that occurred at USIS in Seoul last May. He instructed us to make one good faith effort to have the students leave. We were not to bargain with the students and not to concede anything to them, except to ask them to leave the building. With this instruction, the three of us piled into an Embassy cary-all car and set out for K-16 in Sungnam, where we were to be flown down to Kwangju by helicopter at 2PM. I received the phone call from Kwangju at around 11:15AM, and we were on our way to the air base by 1:15 or so. When we got there, we found that the military helicopter promised to us was not there, and the captain in charge of scheduling flights said that a military turbojet would come for us and take us there at 3PM. It was finally near 4PM when we took off for Kwangju. We arrived at nearly 5PM to be greeted by Mr. Yun (Technician and Driver at the Kwangju ACC. who had been waiting there since 2PM. Also present were two police officials who wished to talk with us before we went to the ACC. Basically,

they wished to persuade us that these students were so bad that talking to them would not help. These officials wanted to be able to go right in now (sic) before nightfall to drive out the students. We said that we would first take a look at the situation, consult with our employees, and then let the police know what we wanted to do.

We drove into town to see lots of police, police buses, and reporters concentrated near the entrance to the ACC. We asked Mr. Yun to let us off a block or two before the Center so we could walk in unobtrusively. I remember walking into the Center to the pop and glare of flashbulbs. As I walked into the Center I glanced at the students in my office, who had covered the windows with placards, and had tied Sam Min Tu headbands around their heads - red letters on a white cotton-like gauze. It made me think of two things: one, the similarity between these students and the ones who sat in at USIS in May, and two, and Christopher Walken as the suicidal Russian roulette playing heroin addict in "The Deer Hunter," a film I had just seen again on video. Walken had a similar headband on in the scene where he plays Russian roulette againopposite his buddy. We sat down to talk with the staff. Each person had been there without lunch break and had eaten and drunk whatever was to be had in our snack bar. Everyone was downcast. I remember constantly moving back and forth between the hall and the library and the front office occupied by Kim Chul-Soon. There were several police officers present and more seemed to come and go. Walt Rochack consulted with them, and wanted to know if the police were prepared and ready to act. It was obvious that we were not prepared to let the students continue for long with their sit in. I saw some of the broadsheets prepared by the students: they were similar to the ones printed in Seoul and at other demos at Chonnam University. There were three printed, and one or two handwritten as well. We had an Americans-only meeting at which we decided to seek a dialogue with the students. Walt Rochak was clear in his orders that we were to give it one fair shot at dialogue, but that if the students refused to leave peacefully and with dispatch, then we would have to call in the police. Ambassador Walker had put Rochak in charge, and that meant I couldn't do otherwise than to follow his lead. I suggested that we organize a place for a meeting with the students. Kang Soo-Il went to the window to tell them that we arrived and wished to talk with them. The students had barricaded my office with furniture they found in it; they had pulled down the shoji doors so that their placards could be better displayed. They also ripped the mosquito screen to get as close as possible to the swarm of reporters waiting outside the gates of the Center, a position from which the reporters could not see what was going on inside the Center grounds. This worked against the students, though they had managed to form megaphones out of paper so that they could better reach the outside.

Kang Soo-Il came back with the reply that the students had two demands before they would meet with us: 1. that they be given the evening paper so that they could see whathad been written about them, and 2. that a reporter be present to monitor the meeting.We agreed to the first demand and refused the second. The students then asked to know the names of those who were to meet with them. We told them through Kang Soo-Il. I had the guards clear out Mr. Yunps office and put in six chairs. At 6:30PM we begantalking. We talked until 7:30PM. The students were soft-spoken, polite, and non-belligerent in their attitude toward us, though their demands were so militant and beyondour authority that the contrast between their demeaner and their demands was striking tome. Two students, both male, came forward to Yun's office and identified themselves.They said they were from Sam Min Tu groups at Chonnam and Chonpuk Universitiesand that they represented the Honam Sam Min Tu Association. They began with theirdemands that they have a meeting with the Ambassador, a meeting with a Min Jung Dangrepresentative to set up a meeting with farmers, laborers, dissidents, and citizens onDecember 4th at the Provincial Capital Building. Their next demand was a pressconference with foreign reporters. They said that they were eager to see that their viewswere correctly represented to the Korean and American peoples, since they felt that thishad not been the case in the May Incident in Seoul USIS.. They had demands for me

at the Center. These were to grant reporters access to meetings, to restore phone lines, and not to permit the police to enter the premises. They emphasized that they wished to settle the sit in in a non-violent, peaceful manner, but that if the police came in to get them, they would resist with every means availableto defend themselves. We knew that they had about four or five molotov cocktails inside the room, so there was a danger of arson and personal injury should one or more of the molotovs be thrown. Another set of demands had to do with the removal of American trade protectionism, trade pressure on Korea, and (U.S.) capital from Korea. They also asked the U.S. Government to stop supporting the military dictatorship of Chun Doo Hwan. These all were delivered by the student from Chonnam, a dark, thin, and soft-spoken young man. Both students were dressed in slacks and shirts with cloth jackets. The second student checked a list in his hand as he listened to his comrade tick off the demands. Then he spoke a little to emphasize the non-violent nature of the group and their insistence that the police not be involved in the process of the talks. The students then asked to hear our point of view. I started off in Korean, but then Art (Alexis) said that Walt (Rochack) would need to understand so we ought to speak in English and have Mr. Kang translate for us. This I did. I said that we regretted the students coming into the Center in this manner, that the Center was always open for dialogue with all groups, especially students. I said that the students should leave the premises and that we were not able to negotiate their demands. Art Alexis spoke and told them of his work with students at the Embassy, and he said that that was why he had come down to Kwangju, because he was in charge of student activities in the Embassy political section. Rochak said that we were not there to negotiate the student demands, but were there to listen to what they had to say. He said that we would pass on whatever they might want to convey to the U.S. government through our line to the State Department. He then reiterated that we could not negotiate and that the students must leave. The students asked us to restore the phone so that they could talk to their comrades. We told them that we could not do this. They said that they had been told the police had cut the phones, so they did not understand why we could not restore the phone lines. We said that we had ordered the phones cut off. This surprised them because Mr. Kang had told them the cut off was an act of the police. They had therefore caught us in a lie, something which I think made them decide not to have further dialogue with us. It was this thing about amounts of relative purity, a contest in which the U.S. side always comes out as less morally pure than the Korean. We also told them that the Ambassador had said that he would not meet with them , period. They recorded our points of view, and then we said a few other things. I chimed in in Korean that I had been a Peace Corps Volunteer and worked for the good of the Korean people for three and a half years, and that I could not but be upset at the way that they came into the Center. I also asked them under what political authority they came into the Center in so illegal a manner. I told them that the whole thing was a very unhappy incident. And so it went for a few minutes with me speaking in Korean and Alexis and Rochak chiming in with their two cents in English and then having Mr. Kang translate for them. I could see during the hour that Rochak was getting tired of talk and was itching to act. We had been in constant contact with Seoul, mostly with Bennie Loggins and Harvey Dunne (The Chief Political Officer of the Embassy). Ambassador Walker had called Washington to consult before he made his decision to ask for police intervention if the second session did not end with the students volunteering to leave as soon as possible.

The meeting broke up with some negotiating over the time of the next session. We finallyagreed to 8:30PM. In the interim, Rochak confirmed his orders and briefed the police. He told them that they were being asked to intervene without violence or physical harm to the students. The police assured Rochak that they could do so. By 8:35 there was nosecond meeting. I went to the window to ask the students to meet. They said to wait for ffive more minutes. In five minutes Kang Soo-Il went to talk to them and they were not yetready. I went again and they said that they would tell Mr. Kang when they were ready. Hewent back and said that the students were not going to meet with us because our points of view were too far apart in the first meeting. They said that future dialogue would be conducted by written exchanges. I then went to the window and asked the

students tomeet with us. The students were engaged in trying to do their own briefing of the reporters outside the gates, after which they broke into some sort of morale-boosting song. I stood under the window and waited. I asked them why they were breaking their promise and whether or not they would leave the Center. They responded that all further correspondence would be through writing. I hung around the window, with Rochak and Alexis and perhaps some of our staff craining around the entrnace to see and hear what was going on. Once again, Rochak looked impatient to get on with it. I stood outside, head bowed, waiting for a chance to talk. But it was over. The students would not talk. Rochak gave the police tthe signal and they came in through the emergency exit from the restaurant through the garden. They broke down the door, but it took them some time because the students had piled furniture in front of it and were blocking it with their bodies as well. One girl yelled something and threw a molotov. Police and firemen sprang into action and began to spray the flames and the whole inside of the office. The students got soaked; the door was broken; the gypsum board walls were knocked through with holes; the floor was littered with wooden splinters, and the place looked awful. I looked a t the staff and could see that they were shocked. Art tried to console me as did Mr. Pang, the ACC librarian. Walt said that the police cheif wanted to meet us at the Provincial Headquarters Building for a drink. I initially said yes, but on reflection realized that I was not going to go; it was a very bad idea.

There were people still outside the Center, but since the gates were closed it was hard to see who was there. We heard shouts of 'gompae' (thugs) coming from the front gates.This turned out to be photographers and reporters protesting their treatment at the handsof the police. We left the Center after inventorying my office to list the damage done. We went out the emergency exit through the garden and the restaurant in back. The patrons did not say much to us, but when we were out in the street I began to feel very uncomfortable. I don't think Walt or Art caught the feeling. Art headed toward the Centergates where a commotion was still going on. Walt and Mr. Song (Security Assistant toWalt Rochak) checked into the nearby 'yogwan.' One of our gurards went to get Arft away from a demonstration which had spontaneously built up in front of the Center. Mr. Song,Walt, Art, and I headed through the back streets of Kwangju toward the Provincial Office.There I said goodbye to them and went home. Those three met the police chief and wentto 'Soogong Kalbi' - where they had dinner - the restaurant having been especially held open for them. This was not a good move because I am sure the word got around town that the Embassy officials had celebrated with the police directly after the incident at the Center. After I got home, I got a couple of phone calls: one from Bennie, who had been calling me on and off all night long - he wanted to get exact wording for a cable to Washington, - what he wanted was for me to say that there had been no injuries to the students, but I refused to say that since I did not know if it were true or not. Another phone call from Ronnie Walton (Taegu BPAO) asking after Marilynn, my wife. I burst out that I was going to resign. That was the first materialization of the feeling that I had been having since the students were apprehended by the police. Next a Yonhap Tongshin (United News Service - Korean news agency) reporter wanted to ask me some questions, but I put him off and told him to direct his questions to Doug Fitzsimmons (USIS Press Information Officer) in Seoul. I was exhausted, yet I found sleep very difficult. The next morning we were off to Seoul by plane. We went straight to see the Ambassador. I later found out that this was not good strategy according to bureaucratic politics because I should have checked in with Bennie before I saw the Ambassador. What was going through my mind at the time was that I should go straight in to see if there was anything needed of me before I went to USIS>

On the plane up to Seoul I read through <u>The Korea Times</u> <u>Korea Herald,</u> and the <u>Hankuk Ilbo.</u> Each story about the incident was different: but the key thing was that the vernacular paper (and later, I was to hear that all vernacular papers were reporting the same story) had reported me as having ordered in the police. When I went in to see the Ambassador with Art Alexis, I told him that I was upset and that I was afraid the incident had forever stained by reputation in Chollado, and that I would be ineffective there in the

future. I also said that I feared the psychologocial consequences of the incident for my family. By the time Bennie got to the Ambassador's office, I had pretty much said what I had to say. I know that Walker, and probably Bennie, does not like me much, but they both listened to me and seemed to be understanding. Walker suggested putting out a rumor that the Center might close, the point being to put a scare into Koreans. Why would this put a scare into Koreans? Because they would lose the Center. But this is precisely what some of the more radical activists are pointing toward - total removal of U.S. presence from Korea. Perhaps that would not be a bad solution for a few years.It would contrinute to Korea's reputation as an independent country, especially in thenext couple of years when world attention will be focused here during the '86 Asian Games and the 88 Olympics. Anyway, the resolution of my meeting with Walker andLoggins was that Bernie made it clear that USIS was going to carry on and that it wastoo early to assess what people were thinking in Chollado. (The account ends here.)

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Questions for Discussion

1. Is the assumption that we construct history through the interaction of text and interpretation a view point that you believe to be correct? How would such a construction of history vary when the same event is examined by two individuals from different cultures?

2. The author chooses to use linguistic analysis and social psychology as tools for looking at what happened in this particular cross-cultural instance. What other socially-constructed tools of analysis could the author have used in examining this sit in incident?

3. How does the rather long personal narrative lend the reader to understanding of the crisis situation? Would you trust it as much as a version of the same events reported in a newspaper of good standing, say the New York Times?

4. In the section entitled *Differing Voices*, there are several view points presented. Which version of events would you tend to believe?

5. Does the fact that the author uses Korean and gives terms in their Korean orthography influence his believability in your eyes? Why or why not?

6. Alfred Bloom believes that there is a sense in which concepts and ways of thinking are not immediately equivalent across cultures from one language to the next? How do you feel about this?

7. Face to face interaction implies a truthfulness which is inferred. I speak to you, and unless there is something you know about me to cause you to think otherwise, you assume I am speaking from the truth that I believe in, that I am not deliberating misrepresenting myself or my ideas. Do you think this assumption holds up across cultures and languages?

8. The author states at the end of the study that he cares about the effect that his study will have on those who have had a role in it. Do you believe him? How would you expect him to concretely manifest this concern?